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'THE STATE OPPRESSES...'
Alpha and Omega
of Dutch social democratic theory
of the state

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1. Introduction

"The tension between planning and democratization is an old dilemma. Socialism regards planning as an outstanding means in order to make a bold stand against the vicissitudes of economic life and the free play of social forces. The simultaneous claim however to give the basis a one hundred per cent say presents naturally continuous problems" (Van Stiphout, 1981, 76). Here the former director of the research office of the Labour party is speaking, looking back to a period in which expectations within Dutch social democracy ran high about the beneficial social effects of state intervention.

Van Stiphout exposed accurately the paradox within Labour's theory of the state - as far as this exists at least. In order to accomplish the ideal socialist society in which man is free (i.e. in which positive and negative freedom are in harmony), the state had to extend its sphere of influence within society. The possible risks for political freedom by granting and warranting social freedom by the state appeared to be made shift with or were not taken seriously at least. Usually no fundamental limit was put to which state intervention within society was allowed, apart from general demands for democratization or a rejection of 'state socialism'. In other words: Labour did not realize the tension which might exist between equality and freedom, its two main ideals. However, in the eighties awareness of this problem was growing within Labour, which was expressed by increasing criticism of the notion that the state could be considered the cock-pit from where social developments could be steered.

In this paper a survey will be presented in broad outline of the development of the interrelation between state and society within social democratic thought, resulting in an extensive treatment of the high-day of etatism in the seventies and the doubts about the reforming capacities of the state in the eighties. We will try to demonstrate that the rather anti-etatist disposition of Labour in its starting period made a partial come-back in the eighties, though in a different shape. At first, the hostile stand of Labour against the state at the turn of the century will be examined and its rapprochement which took place later (2). Next the period of the construction of the welfare state will be described, in which Labour relied on the state as the most important means of social and political coordination and redistribution (3). Then attention will be paid to the climax of etatism in the seventies and its causes (4, 5). Finally we will dwell upon the present crisis within Labour concerning the reforming capacities of the state, and upon the factors which have contributed to this crisis (6, 7). In this process, society gained gradually more importance within Labour (8). Besides, a start was made with the demolition of the utopian remnants within social democratic ideology (9). Some concluding remarks will close this paper (10).

2. The transition of social democracy from class to nation

In the Netherlands, social democracy was born - after an earlier attempt in 1882 - in 1894, with the foundation of the Socialist-Democratische Arbeiderspartij (Social-Democratic Labour Party; SDAP). In its juvenile period, social democracy was fairly reserved towards the state. This attitude could be characterized

as a mixture of neglect and hostility and originated in the fact that early socialist ideology was focussed on society rather than the state. Socialists' primary objective was changing the capitalist mode of production. The state was considered to be a reflection of the present class relations and therefore a tool of the exploiters. Besides social democracy was fairly deterministic. In accordance with marxist theory, it was expected that the social laws of motion would lead necessarily to a new socialist society, sooner or later. In the last resort the state was a derivative of this in essence social development. It was Labour's task to advance this historical process, in which the conquest of the power of the state was an important, but not a decisive moment. As time went by, a more positive evaluation of the state developed gradually in daily practice next to this theoretically rather hostile position. This process originated in and was promoted by social democratic participation in local governments and the general franchise. Slowly but surely, the state (i.e. parliamentary democracy) was seen as a useful instrument in building a new socialist society. This new course won ground within Labour after the First World War. It implied a more voluntaristic inclination which was elaborated in several plans, in which the socialization of the means of production was advocated.

Though Labour appreciated the state now as a useful means, it kept still its distance ideologically. Under the influence of economic crisis and political extremism however, it adapted its revolutionary theory to the reformist practice in the thirties. In 1935 Labour decided to dissociate itself from its ambivalent, "even negative attitude towards the State". As a result, social democracy no longer considered parliamentary democracy a mere transitory phase on the road to socialism, but was converted to the value of this political system as such. Furthermore, the principle of a mixed economy was accepted (Knegtmans, 1989, 178). Socialization was pushed into the background by planning and management by the state à la Keynes, which became the magic words during the economic depression. These instruments were introduced in the first instance to ward off and control the economic crisis, and not primarily to bring about socialism. In this new outlook, the parliamentary constitution of the state was combined with its instrumental function, which resulted in the corporative concept of economic democracy. "On the parliamentary-democratic-individual foundation the 'corporative' construction. This is the political system of Social Democracy!" was stated in a report of Labour in 1935 (cited by Lehning, 1989, 156). This economic democratic system had to be based on so-called 'functional decentralization'. This principle of delegation did not curtail state influence, however. It was expected that by creating corporations and governmental bodies at a lower level, it would be easier for the state to penetrate into society and the private sector in particular. In sum, the slumbering statist disposition of social democracy came more to the fore in the process of this ideological reorientation. In essence, no longer society determined the state, but the state would frame society. These changes in the east were stimulated also by the prolonged waiting for socialism, which made Labour more voluntaristic (Knegtmans, 1989, 253) and, consequently, more statist.

A few years later, a new stap was made in the transformation

of the SDAP into a reforming party. In 1937 Labour underwent an ideological face-lift by dismissing the concept of class-struggle as the engine of social progress from its programme of principles. In fact, this function was taken over by the state. A planning government should bring socialism closer to reality by changing the economic foundations of society. In its declaration of principles, Labour rejected explicitly the notion "that the state should abstain from economic interference" (Vorrink, 1945, 133). Besides Labour would not promote the interests of the working class only; henceforth the national interests and the interests of the working and middle classes as a whole became its target. With this, Dutch social democracy had completed its ideological metamorphosis from a class movement into a national party (Kneegtmans, 1989).

3. The construction of the welfare state

After the Second World War, the transfiguration of social democracy was rounded off organizationally. In 1946, the SDAP merged into the Partij van de Arbeid (Labour Party; PvdA) together with radical liberals and progressive christians. The new social democratic formation clung to the idea of the regulating state and a planned organization of production, just like its predecessor. After a nearly lifelong abstinence, Labour formed part of the government for a dozen years. This prolonged period of participation contributed certainly to Labour's growing identification with the machinery of state (Van Thijn, 1983, 13).

Influenced by Keynes and Beveridge however Labour adopted a rather pragmatic stand (Van Lier, 1981a, 49; 1981b, 148-149). Not so much socialism as the building of the welfare state became the objective in the fifties. According to Lehnig, Dutch social democracy borrowed from the ideas of the British politician A. Crossland. This Labour Member of Parliament identified socialism with the extension of the welfare state, which would lead to an increasing measure of equality (Lehnig, 1989, 173).

Yet Labour continued to produce ambitious social schemes in which planning played a dominant role. In 1951 *De weg naar de vrijheid* ('The Road to Freedom') was published. In this party report - written by Den Uyl, who became later on party leader - planning was regarded not only as compatible with democracy, but also as a pre-condition for it: "the law is the mother of freedom". It wanted to offer a socialist perspective by pointing the way to a community of 'free people', in which negative and positive freedom would be in harmony. In spite of these stilted ambitions, the renewed party declaration of principles of 1959 adopted a somewhat different tune. It pleaded for a mixed economic system, because "in terms of efficiency as well as redistribution of power the co-existence of different forms of collective [gemeenschaps-] and private production are desired".

(Beginseiprogram 1959, 6).

Herewith Labour stuck to its opinion that in accomplishing a fair income distribution, social economic planning by the state was necessary. In this period, Labour embraced the ideas of J.K. Galbraith. In its programme *Om de kwaliteit van het bestaan* ('For the quality of existence'), Labour announced the battle against "collective poverty" now by a policy of increasing public spending (Van Thijn, 1981, 180). The public sector (education, health, etc.) should be extended in order to improve the standard of

living. Of course the tasks allotted to the state were expanded in agreement with the shift in emphasis of prosperity to well-being. Henceforth, its intervening role was not only confined to the socio-economic sphere; in the socio-cultural domain also steering and planning were desired.

4. New Left and the revival of statism

In the times of economic prosperity at the end of the fifties and in the sixties, the necessity of planning vanished from sight within Labour. However the navigative function of the state was not abandoned completely. This period of relative moderation ended around 1970, when Labour radicalized under the influence of New Left ideas and experienced an ideological revival. Labour opened itself to society by absorbing to a certain extent new - 'post-materialist' - issues like democratization, women's lib, environmental protection, nuclear energy and peace which were articulated by the new social movements. This 're-discovery' of society was confirmed by the formal labeling of Labour as an 'action party'. Labour should no longer be only a party of government, but also be active again in society. Apparently in contrast with this renewed social orientation, the reliance on the reforming capabilities of the state was re-activated. In fact New Left stimulated the revival of the traditional Old Left instrument of the planning state, although an important current within New Left held more libertarian ideas (Lucardie, 1986, 304).

This process of growing statism was strengthened by the so-called 'depillarization' of Dutch society, in which the 'Red Family' - the organizational complex of PvdA, trade unions and other allied movements - fell apart (Tromp, 1988, 145). In order to compensate for the resultant waning of social influence, Labour focussed on the state itself. At the beginning of the seventies Labour seized the opportunity and took part in the government headed by Den Uyl. This participation formed not only an outlet for the accumulated statist libido however, but stimulated the statist disposition also because of the opposition it evoked.

In the first place the economic crisis - which became manifest during this government period - asked for state intervention. The entrepreneurs made a stand against these efforts to regulate the private sector, which was labelled as "civil disobedience of the employers" by a leading social democrat at that time (Stuurman, 1978, 15). Moreover, Labour found out that the socio-cultural domain it had discovered in imitation of Galbraith was highly dominated by christian democrats. Having given priority to the policy of well-being as a part of a broader reform of society, the Den Uyl-government tried to replace here private - mostly confessional - initiative by state planning - partly in vain.

The statist high tide within Labour during the seventies found expression in the electoral platforms and new declaration of principles, which was drawn up in 1977. In the platforms, democratization and planning were considered the panacea against all social and political evils. Both recommendations were regarded as two sides of the same coin, without dwelling upon the relation between the two. Just like the thirties when planning went hand in hand with 'functional decentralization', now planning was coupled

with the demand for "deepening and widening of democracy", which should enable the community to get hold again of the fabric of society.

The renewed declaration of principles of 1977 - still valid at present - was served with the same sauce. For the first time since 1937, Labour inserted explicitly the notion of class struggle in its principles again. The state was given wide scope in order to check and steer the free play of social forces. The declaration was imbued with an all-regulating state on nearly every social level. Compared to the old declaration of 1959, extensive socialization was demanded in order to accomplish a mode of production which was in accordance with social needs. Notably basic industries, banks, pension funds, insurance companies, pharmaceutical industries and arms factories were to be socialized, but also other enterprises which were in the way of this social democratic objective.

The wind of democratization blew also in this declaration. Workers' self-management in enterprises and in the public sector was suggested beside an increase of direct influence of citizens on government policy. This time however it was noted that the relation between democratization on the one hand and extended state intervention on the other could become strained. "More hold of the community on economic power formation implies strengthening of the government apparatus. The outcome might be that the distance between citizen and government will increase and that it will not result in democratization in practice" (Begrüßungsprogramm 1977, 29). The declaration, however, did not propose a way out of this dilemma. In the eighties, when the social democratic views on the state came under fire, this Achilles' heel in Labour's - rudimentary - theory of the state was one of the first elements to be criticized.

5. etatism at its pinnacle

In 1979, in the midst of a persistent economic crisis, the party executive devoted its attention to the reforming capacities of the state. In a working paper about economy, it took leave of "a passive government which wants to oil the creaking hinges of the market mechanism with rough measures only" (Beschäftigungs-brief, 1979, 8). Instead, it was taken for granted that social and economic relations are changeable and therefore "liable for political steering" (id., 15). In order to accomplish selective economic growth aimed at a qualitative improvement of the standard of living and more jobs, a "high degree of planning" was required, which had to be combined with "a decentralized and democratic process of decision making wherever possible" (id., 6). The possible dangers of too much planning for democracy were waved aside.

This unbridled reliance on the state was elevated to official party standpoint at the Labour congress in 1979. It found concrete shape in Wegerwerk, the electoral platform for the national elections of 1981. In this programme, excessive government intervention was the only answer Labour offered in dealing with the economic crisis. An exuberance of planning of the economy was proposed; worked out in detailed regulations. A "central plan of development" had to be laid out, which would be binding upon the public sector and partly indicative for the private sector. In this plan - which had to be approved by parliament - tasks were

set for specific economic sectors and regions. Planning institutions had to forecast social, cultural and technological developments as well as regional and sectoral economic trends, on which the central plan should be founded. Contrary to the declaration of principles of 1977 in which Labour was conscious of the drawback of planning for democracy, now the former was considered as a requirement for the latter - just like in 1951. "In a society out of control, democracy threatens to strand in the long run. For a democracy functions well only if people give direction to society and are able to recognize themselves in the policy pursued" (Weerwerk, 1981, 2).

6. turning point

These proposals of Weerwerk did not encounter fundamental opposition within Labour at that time. Party leader Den Uyl for instance spoke highly of the conviction which was expressed in the programme that society could be moulded and that the state held a key-position in this process. Within one and a half year however, this situation was changed and planning was knocked off its pedestal to a certain extent. The disappointing results of the national and regional elections of 1981 and 1982 respectively and the still-born coalition with the christian democrats in this period (which lasted only eight months) were the immediate causes for this change. Besides, Labour became more aware of the crisis in the welfare state. Slowly it woke up to the fact that to many people the welfare state appeared a moneydevouring and opaque bureaucratic labyrinth. In the debate about the future of the welfare state, Labour started to realize with great trouble the deficiency of its traditional recipes of more regulation and expansion of the public sector. Gradually a new direction was set in, labelled 'new realism' by the press in first instance.

The Wiardi Beckman Stichting (WBS), Labour's research office, took the lead in criticizing the hitherto employed concept of planning. Notably Van den Berg and Kalma, director and research associate of the office seemed to be pace-makers. They started to question the way Labour related planning and democracy. In 1982 the WBS-staff published an article in *Socialisme en Democratie* ('Socialism and Democracy') - the party's theoretical journal. Labour's traditional dirigist character was criticized and rejected. Because of the extension of the welfare state; the drifting apart of party and trade union; and the renewal of party cadre and membership, Labour had become a "pre-eminently statist party: a movement which concentrates one-sidedly on the state as a vehicle of social reforms and which has overstrained expectations of the role of the government as an organizer of equality and freedom as well as solidarity". (Van Baarle e.a., 1982, 203).

7. The illusion of the 'democratic state'

In 1982, Kalma stepped up the effort by publishing *De illusie van de 'democratische staat'*. ('The illusion of the 'democratic state''). Ironically, this report was meant originally as a first beginning of a social democratic theory of the state, which the party congress of 1979 had asked for at the peak of etatism. Now,

the report was announced as a "political grenade" by the director of the WBS. It was stated that Labour was facing an "almost Copernican revolution in its thought about state and democracy ever since the twenties" (Kalma, 1982, 8). For safety's sake some critical comments were added, in which Kalma's sweeping statements were qualified.

This essay which reflected influence of French political thinkers like A. Touraine, centred around the question if a strong planning state equipped with large executive powers is consonant with a free, democratic society. According to Kalma the answer is no. In plain terms he advocated that Labour should drop all over-excited pretensions of a 'steerable' society. Of course, the state was indispensable for democracy, but its fundamental task was not to guide society slowly but surely in a certain direction, but to regulate social conflict - the essence of democracy in Kalma's eyes.

In fact Kalma made a butt of Labour's synthesis of economic planning and parliamentary democracy which was practiced since the mid thirties. "The acceptance of the existing democratic system, combined with the lasting striving for an ideal, socialist society" had produced a specific social democratic notion of the state which was called the 'democratic state'. "The central administration - government and parliament - is the instrument by which society rules itself. The state is a means for excellence by which is made for a socialist society" (Kalma, 1982, 43).

This 'democratic state' is regarded as an illusion, a contradiction in terms. Kalma pointed out that this concept of democracy - which is situated exclusively in politics - stemmed from the Enlightenment's idea of sovereignty of the people and the perfectability of society. The ultimate goal is the accomplishment of an identity between state and society in the ideal socialist society. At this moment society rules itself, the subject falls together with the object and "society rules itself" (id., 18). This "turned-down withering away of the state" (id., 51) however is a "totalitarian utopia" according to Kalma (id., 23).

Instead of placing democracy exclusively in the domain of politics like this has been done for ages, Labour should situate it in society. In Kalma's view, a democratic system gives formal room to the expression of social conflict and tries to solve these conflicts. Labour should not base itself on the assumption of an (ultimate) harmony between state and society, but accept the everlasting tension between these two phenomena and the everlasting conflicts within society itself. Kalma recommended that on the one hand the state would leave more things to society (social democracy), and on the other hand should try to frame the conditions on which a democratic society could function. Here he followed in the tracks of the Dutch sociologist Schuyt, who had pleaded for a "horizontal co-ordination within society (action, debate, negotiation) instead of a vertical co-ordination between state and society (legislation, central planning)", without intending to abolish planning completely (Kalma, 1982, 24).

Of course Kalma did not want to question Labour's attachment to political democracy, nor did he want to minimize the role of the state in society. He opposed however the social democratic tenet of the democratic state as the vehicle of social engineering. In fact, he suggested to turn upside down the hitherto professed relationship between state and society. "Like in 'revolutionary' societies the state holds society in an iron

grip, society encloses the state as an octopus in a democracy" (Kalma, 1984, 185). Democracy and centralization were irreconcilable, hence a state within a democratic system had to be 'weak' where it came to its executive, 'steering' tasks. In concreto, it should share its powers with other social organizations and forces.

Apart from these theoretical points, Kalma pointed out also other defects in the state concept of Labour. In the first place, it was based on a too simple representation of society. In reality, society was far too complicated and opaque to be mastered from one point. Besides, the state was pressed by widely divergent social interests, which were impossible to reconcile altogether. Therefore, planning in the name of the general interest was a precarious venture. The state should abandon this claim and take a more meditative position.

Of course this attack against one of the most sacrosanct tenets of social democracy provoked a stormy debate within Labour. Leading members like Van Thijn and Den Uyl reproached Kalma that he had appreciated incorrectly the relation between state and society. Den Uyl reduced Kalma's criticisms to early 19th century's utopian socialism. Though Den Uyl was convinced of the necessity of a debate about the state within Labour in order to demonstrate "how wide an ocean separates us from post-stalinist communism", he held the opinion that Kalma talked nonsense random in a way (Den Uyl 1983, 6). In these times of economic crisis, democratic planning was a bitter necessity according to Labour's leader; Mannheim's Planning for Freedom was still valid in this sense.

Van den Berg, the director of the WBS, was among those who ranged themselves behind Kalma (who would succeed him later to this post). In his opinion, social democracy and the state should not relate to each other like "Siamese twins". Labour had to recognize the fact that social progress "was not possible by authority of the government only; but that this originated in and was made possible by social associations also" (Van den Berg, 1987, 364). This did not imply, however, that the role of the state had ended. To a certain extent, Van den Berg endorsed Kalma's solutions. He advocated an 'entrepreneurial state', situated not above society, but next to it.

8. Society makes its come-back

Although no pronounced consensus was reached about the scope of the state within society in the party debate, the concept of planning was past its prime somewhat in the middle of the eighties. Parallel to this the social factor made its come-back within social democratic thought. In the election platform of 1986 for instance, Labour stated explicitly that one could not construct society from blue-prints. Planning still belonged to the set of instruments with which Labour wanted to go at the economic crisis, but at the same time it was stated that "the government should not regulate more than necessary and feasible, because initiatives of social forces are an indispensable engine for social development" (De toekomst, 1986, 4). Compared to Weerwerk, the proposals in this programme were significantly more modest. After the national elections of 1986, Labour placed the topic of the state on the agenda again. The so-called 'victory-defeat'

of Labour was the immediate cause for this: though Labour had progressed electorally, the centre-right coalition remained firmly in the saddle. Thereupon the party executive installed a commission for programmatic renewal, which had to take up the glove which was thrown by the christian democrats and liberals. These two parties which governed since 1977 (with the exception of the already mentioned short-lived Labour-christian democratic coalition in 1981-82), tried to furnish their policy of wading into the welfare state with an ideological tinge. Their neo-conservative starting-point was translated by the christian democrats in the concept of the 'responsible society'. The state had to step back in order to give way to all kinds of social organizations, which should take over many of its tasks. The liberals were more outspoken and advocated a so-called 'warrant state', which guaranteed a certain social economic minimum to everybody but left anything else to free social activity. Somewhat pushed back by this ideological offensive, Labour tried to formulate an answer in Schuivende panelen: continueit en vernieuwing in de sociaal-democratie ('Sliding Panels: Continuity and Renewal within Social Democracy'). In this report which was published in 1987, the role of the state as a social architect was considerably qualified. The party commission came close to the christian democrats and to party critic Kalma by attaching great importance to the social organizations. In the proposals to hand over responsibilities to these institutions and associations, the omnipotent state was trimmed as a consequence. Schuivende panelen gave explicitly recognition to the paradox concerning the genesis of the social democratic theory of the state before Second World War and its present crisis. "In the thirties, social changes have led to the discovery of the essential place of the state as a mechanism of social guidance, co-ordination and renewal. The present changes together do limit the alertness and guiding capacity of this same mechanism of co-ordination however" (Schuivende panelen, 1987, 59). The changes referred to were environmental pollution; technological development; the internationalization of economy and culture; and individualization. Especially these last two factors were regarded as important. The continuing transfer of power to the European Commonmarket had infringed the planning capacity of the national state. Above all individualization had demonstrated clearly that society was too refractory to be forged by politics, according to the party commission.

Schuivende panelen did not resign itself to this observation. In this individualized society, Labour's task was once more to organize solidarity in order to prevent the economic and cultural isolation of specific groups. The changed situation required a new concept of state: the so-called 'responsible state'. The state should not 'retire' - as was proposed by neo-conservatives -, but turn into a more 'flexible' form of government. In general, the state should pay more attention to organizations which operated on the intermediary level between state and individual. In this revaluation of the 'social intermediate zone' Labour moved considerably in the direction of the christian democrats. In the economic sphere, a combination of 'more state and more market' was asked for.

Kalma's De illusive van de democratische staat reverberated weakly in Schuivende panelen. The recipe of more planning sec was rejected because of its elitist and less democratic aspects. The

advocated option in which the state shared responsibilities with social institutions was not only justified pragmatically, but emanated also from "the limitations which are set to state action by demands of legality (...), limited expertise and general accepted freedom rights" (Schuivende panelen, 1987, 147). Despite this less statist stand and the plea for decentralization and democratization of the state, Schuivende panelen did not break fundamentally with the combination of parliamentary democracy and planning state which was pursued since the thirties, as Kalma had advised. Labour should still strive for "an increase of social equality, (which) implies freedom for citizens at the same time". Of course, "an active central government" was a guarantee for achieving this aim (Schuivende panelen, 1987, 126). Traditionally it was assumed that a continuing process of political democratization would facilitate the acceptance of radical governmental decisions.

The debate within Labour about the state flared up again after the publication of Schuivende panelen. The report was discussed - and criticized - by party members and cadre. Kalma also joined in. In the dispute, the party executive had the final say. Early 1989 it published a manifesto called Om de kwaliteit van de toekomst ('For the quality of the future'). In this verdict the party debate was weighed and found wanting to a certain extent: "The capacity of politics and government to exert an influence on the composition of society has been minimized too lightly the last ten years." (Om de kwaliteit, 1989, 3) People need means to frame their own future. Since the market alone did not furnish them with these, the state has to come to the rescue by organizing solidarity. In the opinion of the executive, the public sector has to play a renewing and stimulating role in the nineties, especially in the domains of economy and environment. However, the state was no longer the order of the day in the manifesto, like in the party documents of the seventies and early eighties. If anything, the opposite was the case. The traditional domination of state over market was replaced by a more supporting role. According to the party executive, "an active, alert government is indispensable, if the market process should function well" (Om de kwaliteit, 1989, 5). This vision was elaborated in the election platform of 1989, which was grafted upon the manifesto. In this programme Labour regarded an "appropriate state... especially as a condition to the power of competition" (Kiezen, 1989, 1). More general this programme breathed a modest state-concept, notwithstanding the earlier statement of the executive. It was argued that the notion of a state which "makes the defence of all vulnerable interests its monopoly... did not fit in with our tradition of emancipation of all citizens to more freedom and responsibility", though the government still had to guarantee a safety net of "organized solidarity" (Kiezen, 1989, 12).

Upon the manifesto the neo-corporative trend within the party debate had left its mark. In line with Kalma's recommendations and the findings embodied in Schuivende panelen, the party executive acknowledged the fact that "the search for solutions requires a joint (Labour's) efforts... of politics, social organizations and individuals" (Om de kwaliteit, 3). In particular trade unions and employers' organizations were invited in helping to bring about an economic renaissance. Again this was expanded in

the election platform a few months later, which - unlike the manifesto - seemed to adopt Kalma's concept of social democracy based on horizontal co-ordination. An appeal to society to organize solidarity was judged insufficient; therefore "the legislator had to lay down the conditions on which the participants in the social intercourse can be talked to... In the opinion of Labour, government and citizens have separate but complementary responsibilities" (Kiezen, 1989, 12).

9. A farewell to socialist utopia

After this process of reappraisal of the interrelationship between state and society had resulted in a partial 'detatization' of Labour - at least for the time being -, the moment had arrived to examine the underlying stimulus of Labour's predilection for the state. Again, the brunt was borne by Kalma. In *Socialisme op sterk water* ('Socialism put in spirits', 1988) he embroiled on the theme of the *Illusties van de 'democratische staat*. Having criticized earlier the notion of the state as a means in bringing about a just society, he took now the next logical step by assailing social democratic eschatology. To a certain extent *Schuldenvande pannen* had paved his way by citing approvingly the German social democratic leader Brandt, who had stated that social democracy should not intend to enact 'Happiness'.

To Kalma's mind, the crisis of Labour was for the greater part the result of the fact that it still chased this ideal.

Because of its "still slumbering longing for a entirely different, socialist society" Labour expected too much of participation in government (Socialisme, 1988, 159). Besides, it prevented social democracy from realizing how much was established already of its programme. As a consequence Labour should renounce socialist utopia without abandoning the wish to improve society however, according to Kalma. Instead, in which it had helped to reconcile capital and labour without interfering fundamentally with its capitalist and individualist engines. By doing so, Labour had made its contribution - partly unwillingly - to accomplish 'social-capitalism' (Socialisme, 1988, 160). Labour had to admit that it was no more than "organized liberalism" as Bernstein had called it already in 1899, and continue on this road in order to solve the present 'crisis' of the welfare state by accomplishing a new compromise between capital and labour.

In *Socialisme op sterk water* Kalma played again the theme of the undesired contamination of democracy and planning. Instead of focussing on the output of planning, he dwelled now on the input by pointing out the negative effects of a steering government on capitalism, which he regarded as "a perhaps not sufficient, but certainly a necessary precondition to democracy" (Socialisme, 1988, 81). Social democracy should endorse the free, relatively autonomous functioning of the market mechanism as the only base for a free, open and democratic society, in Kalma's opinion. Although the socialist ideal did not play a prominent role in the daily practical politics of Labour, Kalma's essay caused a sensation. Especially his concrete proposals like the increase of income differences were denounced. However, his opinions about socialist ideals were picked up by the party top, as opposed to the beginning of the eighties when Kalma's views were rejected by

Within social democratic theory, society and state alternately were considered the ultimate moving factors in the process of social progress. Since the turn of the century their relation to one another could be pictured as two communicating vessels since the turn of the century. Originally, the primacy of society was combined with a neglect of the state. In the last resort, social change would result in the withering away of the state. Within a few decades, the roles were reversed. The deterministic inclination was abandoned and the state was regarded gradually as the vehicle of historical progress. Correspondingly the social factor became a quantifiable negligible within social democratic theory; henceforth the state moulded society. In essence this voluntaristic, statist era lasted till the eighties. A reappraisal of society was outlined however by the persistent economic depression, the so-called crisis in the welfare state and the neo-conservative reaction - among other things. Yet within Labour the traditional statist recipe was not abandoned so easily. In Schuivende Panelen it was attempted to reconcile 'more state' to 'more market'. This four the force seems just as difficult as the raising of liquid in both communicating vessels at the same time. In fact the state is somewhat in retreat in social democratic theory, while society is coming to the fore. It is more or less taken for granted within Labour that all kinds of social organizations contribute also to social progress. Although the former deterministic inclination did not return, the

10. Conclusion

Watchword in Koks plea was the 'practical reforming disposition, based on social consensus'. If Kok applied for a position for Labour in the new cabinet by this new look, he was successful. In November 1989, a coalition was formed between christian democrats and social democrats. Key-word of the new government was the concept of 'social renewal'. After a prolonged period of neo-conservative policies aimed at economic recovery, it was now time for improving the 'quality of society'. Compared to earlier periods of social democratic participation in the government, the role of the central state was rather modest in this undertaking. Trade unions, employers' organizations and municipalities were invited explicitly to contribute. also. which therefore necessitated a reserved attitude of the state prosperity was realized by the functioning of the market too, successful governmental policy. He admitted that economic change, but preached social consensus as the pre-condition for a regarded the state no longer as the one and only lever to social changing society, cherishing its own traditions in isolation". Kok should become "an open movement which does not turn its back to a capitals - The Alternative" (Het conservatisme, 1989.) Labour democracy contributed to social change, it "did not embody - in centre-right coalition. Literally Kok stated that, although social national elections which were necessitated by the fall of the Not coincidentally this was done during the campaign for the farewell to the great visions of a socialist society. his predecessor by publicly adopting Kalma's ideas and saying later, in the summer of 1989, he dissociated himself somewhat from union - had succeeded Den Uyl as a party leader. Three years Den Uyl. In 1986 Kok, - former chairman of the largest Dutch trade

state had to adopt more a waiting attitude. In this period of reflection, Labour started to shake off its ideal of a socialist society. Utopian notions were regarded out of fashion and considered impedimental to daily politics. Together with the renunciation of the faith in the 'malleable' society, Labour becomes alienated from its roots: the thoughts of 18th century Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Because of the abandoning of the tenet of man's perfectibility by Labour, the social democratic positive image of man will be questioned inevitably. As a consequence, Labour might draw closer to the christian anthropology of 'man is inclined to all evil' or Hobbes' homo homini lupus. Perhaps this final step will be taken in the revision of the programme of principles of 1977, which was announced recently by the party executive.

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